



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2022

by M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/W/21/3283998

Land at Harbours Hill, Wildmore, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 0QY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant approval required under Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
 - The appeal is made by M Wood against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01164/AGR, dated 16 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is general purpose agricultural storage building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and prior approval is granted under the provisions of Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A, Paragraph A.2. of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for general purpose agricultural storage building at Land at Harbours Hill, Wildmore, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 0QY, in accordance with the application Ref 21/01164/AGR, dated 16 July 2021, and the details submitted with it pursuant to Article 3(1) and Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A, paragraph A.2.(2).

Preliminary Matter

2. The address of the appeal site on the application form is incomplete. Therefore, for the purposes of my Decision I have supplemented this with the address information contained in the appellant's appeal form.

Background

3. The appellant's holding comprises two fields, a larger open field (lower field) bordered by the A491 to the south and Harbours Hill to the east and a smaller field (upper field) and woodland to the north of the lower field which also adjoins Harbours Hill. The site is located within the Green Belt.
4. The main parties agree that because the proposed building is for agricultural purposes, it is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. I have no reason to disagree.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, with regard to siting, design and external appearance.

Reasons

6. The appeal site comprises part of the upper field, bound by a woodland area along its western side and boundary hedging and trees on all other sides except along part of its southern boundary which adjoins the lower field and where the proposed building is to be located.
7. The surrounding countryside is defined by its rural character with fields, delineated by boundary hedges and trees, with some isolated and clusters of dwellings and other buildings. Most notably, the topography of the appellant's holding, rises steeply from the A491.
8. The proposed building would be open fronted, clad with juniper green box profile metal sheeting, and its roof would be composed of grey fibre cement sheeting. As such, its design, simple form and external appearance are consistent with modern agricultural buildings.
9. The building would occupy a proportionate footprint relative to the field it would be located within, with an overall ridge height of nearly 6.1m and about 4.87m to the eaves. On the information before me, there is nothing to suggest that the size of the proposed building is not appropriate for its required purpose.
10. In terms of siting, the Councils adopted High Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document, adopted June 2019 (Design SPD), advises that when seen from a distance it is not the siting of a building which is apparent but its scale in relation to adjacent buildings. Adding that, tight clusters of buildings generally look more settled in the landscape than scattered ones.
11. I acknowledge that a standalone building would be more conspicuous than one within a group. Nevertheless, the Design SPD is guidance and, in this case, the proposed building would be located along a field boundary in a corner of the upper field, which is furthest away from Harbours Hill, as such only glimpsed views of this building would be available from the gated access into this field and the access to the lower field both of which are along Harbours Hill.
12. From along the A491, views of the appeal site are largely screened by the hedgerows along the lower field which run adjacent with the road. In any case, such views are from a distant and the field in which the proposed building is located is on lower ground relative to the lower field and therefore the new building would appear settled and benefit from some screening arising from the difference in land levels.
13. Furthermore, in most views, the proposed building would be seen in the context of the adjacent woodland and nearby trees rather than in an entirely exposed location. This would further absorb its scale and effect. I accept that the existing landscaping is not permanent feature and the extent of screening this offers will vary during seasons, but in the context of the rural location, I find it unlikely that they would be removed or significantly altered.
14. A public footpath (BB-599) exists near the site. When travelling along this footpath from the A491 and where it crosses the upper field, views of the proposed building would be available. However, as reasoned above, the materials and appearance of the new building are appropriate for its agricultural use. Consequently, this type of building would not appear out of keeping in this rural setting. Moreover, some views of built development are already available from parts of this footpath.

15. For the above reasons, whilst the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed building would bring some change to the character and appearance of the area, the proposal would not unacceptably harm this. Consequently, I find no conflict with the design aims of Policy BDP19 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (2011-2030) adopted January 2017 and the Council's Design SPD, insofar as they are material to this application for prior approval.

Other Matters

16. Whilst the Council has referred to the proposed building being sited in alternative locations on land owned and used by the appellant, these do not form part of the proposal before me.

Conditions

17. For the avoidance of doubt, Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A paragraph A.2.(2)(vi)(bb) specifies that, other than where approval has been given by the local planning authority, the development must be carried out within a period of 5 years from the date on which the local planning authority were provided with the information referred to in paragraph A.2.(2)(d)(ii) of that Class.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would be acceptable with respect to siting, design and external appearance. The appeal should therefore be allowed and prior approval is granted.

M Aqbal

INSPECTOR